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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1315

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

COMIDEASTFOR

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MADRAS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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USS LA SALLE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 COLOMBO 2000

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ECON, MV

SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S VISIT TO MALDIVES, JULY 5-8,1974

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REF: A) COLOMBO 676 (NOTAL) B) COLOMBO 3113,

DECEMBER 18, 1973 (NOTAL), C) COLOMBO 3248,
DECEMBER 12, 1972 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: MAIN PURPOSE OF AMBASSADOR'S VISIT TO MALDIVES WAS TO HAND OVER RADIO EQUIPMENT PROVIDED BY USG AND TO DEMONSTRATE CONTINUED INTEREST IN ISLAND REPUBLIC. PRIME MINISTER REITERATED GOM INTENTION TO FOLLOW TRULY NON-ALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY. WITH EXCEPTION OF UNITED KINGDOM BECAUSE OF RAF GAN, GOM CONSIDERED ITS MOST IMPORTANT FOREIGN RELATIONSHIPS TO BE WITHIN REGION; WITH SRI LANKA, INDIA, PAKISTAN, AND SINGAPORE. PRIME MINISTER PLANS TO MAKE OFFICIAL VISITS TO SRI LANKA, PAKISTAN, AND UNITED KINGDOM, AND MRS. GANDHI HAS ACCEPTED INVITATION TO VISIT MALDIVES BEFORE END OF YEAR. HE WILL PROBABLY NOT SEND DELEGATION TO UN THIS YEAR. SRI LANKA-MALDIVES RELATIONS ARE BACK ON EVEN KEEL FOLLOWING VERY SOUR PERIOD LAST FALL AND WINTER DUE TO CEYLONER HIGH-HANDEDNESS. IN INTERIM, INDIANS HAVE MANAGED TO INCREASE THEIR PRESENCE SIGNIFICANTLY. OTHER ACTORS SUCH AS UNITED STATES, RUSSIA, JAPAN, AND PRC, ARE KEEPING THEIR HANDS IN, BUT IN LOWER KEY. PRIME MINISTER INDICATED THAT GOM HAS NO INTENTION OF BECOMING HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON ANY ONE COUNTRY. GOM CONTINUES TO APPROACH ALL MATTERS WITH GREAT CIRCUMSPENSION; IN FINANCES IT INSISTS ON BEING SELF-SUFFICIENT AND PAYING CASH EVEN IF THIS MEANS FOOD SHORTAGES FOR ITS PEOPLE. YET IT IS OBVIOUSLY MAKING RELATIVELY RAPID STRIDES IN ECONOMIC SPHERE WITH TOURIST INDUSTRY, PARTICULARLY, EXPERIENCING RAPID EXPANSION. U.S.- MALDIVES RELATIONS ARE FRIENDLY BUT VERY LIMITED. PRIME MINISTER MADE SPECIAL POINT OF WELCOMING U.S. NAVAL SHIP VISIT AND EXPRESSED INTEREST IN HAVING VISITS SOMEWHAT MORE FREQUENTLY. HE WAS RECEPTIVE TO EXPOSITION OF U.S. POSITION ON DIEGO GARCIA AND U.S. NAVAL PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN. ALTHOUGH, WHILE IN INDIA, HE HAD EXPRESSED REGRET THAT OUTSIDE MILITARY FORCES WERE IN OCEAN, HE MADE IT CLEAR HE WAS REFERRING TO ALL OUTSIDE POWERS. EDUCATION MINISTER

REQUESTED USG HELP IN UPGRADING EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN MALE THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL BY PROVISION OF LABORATORY EQUIPMENT FOR SCIENCE SUBJECTS. END SUMMARY.

2. INTRODUCTION: AMBASSADOR VAN HOLLEN ACCOMPANIED BY FIRST CONFIDENTIAL

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SECRETARY KAY, DEFENSE ATTACHE SEGER, SECOND SECRETARY MONGOMERY, AND WIVES, VISITED REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES JULY 5-8, 1974 FOR AMBASSADOR'S FIRST VISIT SINCE PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS IN DECEMBER 1972 (REFTEL C). FOLLOWING ONE NIGHT'S ENJOYABLE STAY ABOARD USS LA SALLE, WHICH HAD ARRIVED IN MALE SHORTLY BEFORE AMBASSADOR, PARTY MOVED TO KURUMBA VILLAGE TOURIST ISLAND JULY 6. RETURN TRIP TO COLOMBO WAS DELAYED OVERNIGHT DUE TO STRONG TROPICAL STORM WHICH MADE TAKE-OFF IN RILEY-HERON

AIRCRAFT, CHARTERED FROM SRI LANKA AIR FORCE, IMPOSSIBLE. IN ADDITION TO PRESENTATION OF RADIO EQUIPMENT, AMBASSADOR HAD FRANK AND USEFUL TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER, CALLED ON EDUCATION MINISTER, AND WAS GUEST AT TEA GIVEN BY FINANCE MINISTER. PLAN TO PRESENT PRESIDENT WITH MOON ROCK AND MALDIVIAN FLAG CARRIED TO MOON COULD NOT BE CARRIED OUT AS PRESIDENT WAS SUFFERING FROM BOUT OF FLU. CHIEF OF PROTOCOL SUGGESTED AMBASSADOR DEFER PRESENTATION UNTIL ANOTHER VISIT. AMBASSADOR ALSO HOSTED LUNCH ABOARD USS LA SALLE WHICH INCLUDES FISHERIES, FINANCE, AND EDSMATION MINSTERS. IN ADDITION TO CALLS, USS LA SALLE HOSTED HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL BUFFET AND MOVIE JULY 5 FOR SECOND-LEVEL MALDIVIAN OFFICIALS AND WIVES. LASALLE WAS LESS SUCCESSFUL IN SOCCER MATCH IT LOST TO MALE 7-3. ONE WAS STRUCK BY YOUTH, ENERGY, AND SELF-POSSESSION OF THESE UP-AND-COMING LEADERS OF MALDIVES. ISOLATION AND BEAUTY OF MALDIVES CONTINUES TO BE REMARKABLE FEATURE OF THIS TINY COUNTRY BUT MODERN SPEED BOATS BELONGING TO TOURIST RESORTS AND DUTY-FREE SHOPS IN MALE PROVIDE CONTRAST WHICH INDICATES TIMES ARE CHANGING.

3. PRESENTATION OF RADIO EQUIPMENT: WITH TROPICAL SUN REFLECTING OFF BRILLIANT WHITE SAND OF MALE, AMBASSADOR ON JULY 6 PRESENTED PRIME MINISTER ZAKI WITH RADIO EQUIPMENT FOR INTER-ATOLL LINK. EQUIPMENT WAS TRANSPORTED TO MALDIVES BY USS LA SALLE. LA SALLE CREW MEMBERS HAD ERECTED HANDSOME DISPLAY OF EQUIPMRNT, INCLUDING TEN-FOOT WINDMILL TO CHARGE BATTERIES WHICH SUPPLY RADIO UNITS. PRIME MINISTER EXPRESSED GOM'S APPRECIATION FOR GIFTS WHICH WOULD HELP ENHANCE COMMUNICATIONS AMONG ALL ATOLLS.

4. MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER: IN MEETING WHICH FOLLOWED PRESENTATION, PRIME MINISTER LUCIDLY SET FORTH HIS VIEWS OF MALDIVES' PLACE IN WORLD. USING OLD MALDIVIAN PROVERB THAT "EACH CRAB MUST DIG ITS OWN HOLE", ZAKI MADE CLEAR THAT
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GOM REALIZES IT IS GOVERNING SMALL COUNTRY WHOSE ROLE IS LIMITED BY SIZE, RESOURCES, AND LOCATION. IT THEREFORE PLANS TO LIMIT ITS ACTIVITIES TO EXTENT OF ITS RESOURCES AND ABILITIES AND DOES NOT PLAN TO OVEREXTEND ITSELF FOR PRESTIGE PURPOSES. HE NOTED LIBYANS, WHO HAVE GIVEN BOAT FOR INTER-ATOLL TRANSPORTATION, HAD BEEN URGING MALDIVIANS TO SET UP DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN VARIOUS ARAB AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES BUT HE ABJURED THIS, NOTING INEXPERIENCED MALDIVIANS MIGHT ONLY BECOME INVOLVED IN RADICAL POLITICS WHICH WOULD DO MALDIVES NO GOOD AND WASTE CRITICALLY SHORT MANPOWER. ZAKI ALSO INDICATED GOM WOULD PROBABLY NOT SEND DELEGATION TO UN THIS YEAR, NOTING THAT THIS WOULD BE DIFFICULT WHEN HE HAD IN-SUFFICIENT PEOPLE TO MAN MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS.

5. FOCUS ON REGION: GOM CONSIDERS ITS MAIN FOREIGN

RELATIONSHIPS TO BE WITHIN REGION: WITH SRI LANKA, INDIA, AND PAKISTAN, AND WITH UNITED KINGDOM FOR "HISTORICAL REASONS". GOM IS ALSO EXPLORING SETTING UP OF OFFICIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SINGAPORE, WHERE OFFICE OF SHIPPING LINE HAS BEEN LOCATED. PRIME MINISTER SAID HE HAS ACCEPTED INVITATIONS TO VISIT SRI LANKA, WHICH HE EXPECTED TO DO SHORTLY, AND TO VISIT PAKISTAN AND UNITED KINGDOM BEFORE END OF YEAR. MRS. GANDHI HAS ACCEPTED INVITATION TO VISIT MALDIVES WHICH IS ALSO EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE BEFORE END OF YEAR. FOLLOWING ZAKI'S VISIT TO INDIA EARLIER THIS YEAR, THIS WOULD COVER COUNTRIES WITH WHICH MALDIVES HAS CLOSEST RELATIONS.

6. FRIENDS WITH SRI LANKA AGAIN: RELATIONS WITH SRI LANKA SEEM TO BE BACK ON THE TRACK AFTER BEING BADLY BOTCHED BY CEYLONESE LAST YEAR DURING ALI MANIKU INCIDENT (REFTEL B). SINCE THEN, CEYLONESE HAVE SENT THREE SETS OF VISITORS TO MALE AS PART OF EFFORT TO PATCH THINGS UP: FOREIGN OFFICE TEAM LAST DECEMBER HEADED BY MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECRETARY JAYASINGHE, NAVAL VISIT IN FEBRUARY, AND INFORMAL ONEDAY VISIT IN MAY BY KUMAR AND SUNETHRA RPUASINGHE, PRIME MINISTER BANDARANAIKE'S SON-IN-LAW AND DAUGHTER. PROBLEM WAS FINALLY IRONED OUT DURING PRESIDENT NASIR'S VISIT TO COLOMBO IN JUNE. MALDIVIANS ALSO CONSIDER AS SUCCESSFUL VISIT BY MALDIVIAN DELEGATION TO COLOMBO AT END OF JUNE, LED BY FINANCE MINISTER SATTAR. FORMAL AIR AGREEMENT WAS WORKED OUT BY SATTAR DELEGATION WHICH WILL ALLOW AIR

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MALDIVES TO LAND IN SRI LANKA WHILE CEYLONESE WILL PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN CIVIL AVIATION FIELD. ON ECONOMIC ISSUES, COMPROMISE WAS REACHED EXTENDING TIME TO 8-10 YEARS FOR PHASE-OUT OF MALDIVE FISH (MAIN EXPORT EARNER FOR MALDIVIANS) PURCHASES BY GSL WHICH HAD PLANNED TO BAN THEM AS LUXURY IMPORT ITEM.

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7. INDIANS MOVE IN: INDIANS HAD MOVED
QUICKLY AT TIME OF STRAIN IN MALDIVIAN-
CEYLONese RELATIONS TO ENHANCE THEIR PRESENCE
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AND PRIME MINISTER ZAKI DID FIRST OFFICIAL
VISIT OUTSIDE MALDIVES TO NEW DELHI EARLIER
THIS YEAR. SETTING UP OF STATE BANK OF INDIA
BRANCH IN MALE, DIRECT TELETYPE LINK TO BOMBAY,
AND ESTABLISHMENT OF MALDIVIAN NATIONALS
TRADING CORP OFFICE IN BOMBAY, WITH
PLAN TO ESTABLISH MALDIVIAN CONSULATE IN BOMBAY
LATER IN YEAR, ALL FOLLOWED IN RAPID
SUCCESSION. DESIRE TO ESTABLISH DIRECT AIR
LINK TO INDIA HAS APPARENTLY BEEN STYMIED BY
SHORTNESS OF HULULE AIRPORTS RUNWAY. PRIME

MINISTER ZAKI INDICATED IN NO UNCERTAIN TERMS, HOWEVER, THAT MALDIVIANS HAVE NO INTENTION OF BECOMING HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON ANY ONE COUNTRY. SAYING THEY HAD LEARNED "BITTER LESSON" WHEN CEYLONSE HAD CUT BACK ON MALDIVE FISH IMPORTS, WITH DISRUPTION OF MALDIVIAN ECONOMY, ZAKI SAID GOM IS ATTEMPTING TO DIVERSIFY DIPLOMATIC, ECONOMIC, AND COMMERCIAL CONTACTS AS NECESSARY AND IN KEEPING WITH MALDIVES OWN PECULIAR NEEDS AND INTERESTS.

8. OUTSIDE CONTACTS ARE EXPANDING: IN FACT, SOME TWENTY COUNTRIES HAVE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH MALDIVES, AUSTRALIA AND PHILIPPINES BEING LATEST ADDITIONS. DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH SINGAPORE NOW UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION WITH POSSIBILITY GOM WILL ESTABLISH CONSULATE THERE. RECENTLY INDIANS HAVE BEEN MOST ACTIVE IN MALDIVES. IN ADDITION TO ACTIVITIES MENTIONED ABOVE, AMB CBOELHO HAS VISITED MALDIVES FREQUENTLY AND WE LEARNED FROM MALDIVIAN LEADERS THAT INDIANS ARE ALSO STUDYING FEASIBILITY OF INSTALLING SEA FOOD CANNERY AND FREEZING UNIT IN TWO ATOLLS NORTH OF MALE, ARE EXPANDING THIER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM FOR MALDIVIAN STUDENTS, AND ARE PROVIDING THREE TEACHERS TO MALE SCHOOLS.

9. SOVIET MALDIVIAN RELATIONS:

USSR HAS MAINTAINED ACTIVITY IN MALDIVES --
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OFFERING STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS, AND WE WERE INFORMED BY MALDIVIANS THAT SOVIET OCEANOGRAPHIC RESEARCH VESSEL "IZUMRUD" WAS OPERATING IN MALE ATOLL DURING OUR VISIT. PRIME MINISTER ZAKI WONDERED IF THIS WAS MERELY COINCIDENCE. PRIME MINISTER ALSO TOLD US HIS 22-YEAR OLD SON IS IN COLOMBO HAVING JUST BEEN KICKED OUT OF RUSSIAN MARINE ENGINEERING TRAINING SCHOOL IN LENINGRAD APPARENTLY FOR SECOND TIME. REASON GIVEN WAS SON'S OBJECTION TO BEING PUT TO WORK IN COLD

STORAGE PLANT WHICH HE THOUGHT UNECESSARY PART OF MARINE ENGINEERING. HIS FATHER SAID HE HAD VIOLATED 8-KILOMETER CIRCLE OUTSIDE OF WHICH STUDENTS ARE NOT SUPPOSED TO TRAVEL WITHOUT PERMISSION. OTHERS SAID PROBLEM WAS YOUNG ZAKI'S PENCHANT FOR DATING RUSSIAN GIRLS.

10. OTHERS CHIP IN: OTHER COUNTRIES ARE ALSO KEEPING THEIR HANDS IN. PRC AMB VISITED MALE AT END OF APRIL AND PRC HAS OFFERED SIX HIGH-POWERED TELECOMMUNICATIONS SETS. PAKISTANI AMB HAS VISITED MALE ON THREE OCCASIONS, MOST RECENTLY IN EFFORT URGE GOM TO CONDEMN INDIAN NUCLEAR TEST. HE HAS TOLD US PAKISTANI GIFT IS PROVIDING PRINCIPAL FOR BOYS SCHOOL AS WELL AS 12-TON BOAT FOR INTER-ATOLL

TRANSPORTATION AND PATROL WORK.

11. FISHING REMAINS ECONOMIC BASE: FISHING REMAINS BASIC INDUSTRY OF ISLANDS AND MALDIVIANS ARE ATTEMPTING TO REVISE FRESH FISH AGREEMENT WITH JAPANESE COMPANY (REFTEL C) TO OBTAIN HIGHER PRICES. THEY ARE ALSO PLANNING TO MECHANIZE FISHING FLEET AND HAVE ASKED JAPAN FOR 220 DIESEL

BOAT ENGINES WHICH GOJ IS CONSIDERING. PHASE-OUT OF "MALDIVE FISH" SALES TO SRI LANKA, WITH DRIED FISH TO BE SUBSTITUTED, MAY HAVE LONG-TERM
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EFFECT IN CHANGING OCCUPATIONAL PATTERNS OF MALDIVIANS AS DRIED FISH TAKES MUCH SHORTER TIME TO PREPARE.

12. SHIPPING INDUSTRY EXPANDS: MALDIVIAN MERCHANT MARINE CONTINUES TO EXPAND AND WE WERE TOLD LATEST ACQUISITION, NUMBER FORTY-SIX, WAS ARRIVING IN MALE FOR FIRST TIME ON DAY OF AMBS DEPARTURE. MOST OF THESE SHIPS, HOWEVER, RARELY CALL AT MALE ALTHOUGH NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS ARE SHIPS ON MALE-SINGAPORE ROUTE WHICH EVERY 40 DAYS BRING IN SUPPLIES FOR TOURIST OPERATIONS AND FOR OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF GOM. FURTHER EXPANSION IN MERCHANT MARINE FIELD WAS NEWS THAT GOM HAS APPOINTED HONORARY CONSUL IN GREECE TO PURSUE SHIPPING INTERESTS.

13. TOURIST BOOMS: MOST DRAMATIC INCREASE ON ECONOMIC SIDE, HOWEVER, IS MUSHROOMING TOURIST INDUSTRY. FROM ABOUT 120 BEDS ON TWO ISLANDS ACCOMMODATING 500 TOURISTS IN 1972-73 SEASON, WE WERE TOLD INDUSTRY WILL GROW TO 800 BEDS ON SEVEN ISLAND FOR 1974-75 SEASON, WITH ABOUT 8,000 CONFIRMED RESERVATIONS ALREADY IN HAND AND MORE EXPECTED. THIS CONTRASTS WITH 4200 TOURISTS IN 1973-74 SEASON. COMPETITION BETWEEN MALDIVIAN TOURIST COMPANIES

SEEMS TO BE ERASED, POSSIBLY BECAUSE EXPANSION OF TOURIST FACILITIES IS SO RAPID AND DEMAND SO GREAT THAT ENERGIK AND CAPITAL HAVE TO BE DIRECTED TOWARD EXPANDING CAPACITY. HOWEVER, REVENUE FROM ONLY ONE OF THESE TOURIST ISLANDS (WELIGILI, FORMER PRISON ISLAND ADJACENT TO MALE) REVERTS TO GOM TREASURY. PROFITS FROM OTHER ISLANDS GO TO DIRECTORS OF DESCENDANT TOURIST AGENCY (CTA), CONTROLLED LARGELY BY PRESIDENT NASIR, ALI MANIKU, EXTERNAL AFFAIRS UNDER SECRETARY KANDY ISMAIL, AND A MR ADAM WHO RUNS POWER STATION ON MALE. PARTIAL SHARE ALSO GOES TO KURUMBA VILLAGE FOUNDERS, NASEEM, AND ALI MANIKU'S YOUNGER BROTHER, WHO HAVE NOW

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PARTIALLY MERGED WITH CTA. DESPITE SOME EFFORTS TO ISOLATE TOURIST ACTIVITIES FROM GENERAL POPULACE, THIS WILL PROVE INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT IF PLANS PROCEED TO EXTEND TOURIST

OPERATIONS TO OTHER 18 ATOLLS IN ADDITION TO MALE. REPERCUSSIONS OF SUCH EXPANSION ON SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES OF MALDIVIANS COULD BE SUBSTANTIAL.

14. ACCESS IS MAJOR PROBLEM: LIMITING FACTOR FOR TOURIST INDUSTRY IS LACK OF AIRPORT WHICH CAN ACCOMMODATE LARGE AIRPLANES. PRESENT RUNWAY AT HULULE IS BEING EXTENDED TO OVER 9,000 FEET, BUT THIS IS MAXIMUM IN PRESENT ALIGNMENT. BRITISH TEAM WAS SENT TO MALE ABOUT SIX WEEKS AGO TO EXAMINE POSSIBILITIES OF EXTENDING RUNWAY OR OTHER ALTERNATIVES. RESULT OF STUDY, ACCORDING TO BRITISH DEFENSE ADVISOR, IS THAT MAXIMUM LENGTH TO WHICH PRESENT RUNWAY COULD BE EXTENDED ALONG PRESENT ALIGNMENT IS 9,600 FEET. THIS IS RESULT OF CONFIGURATION OF ATOLL. THERE IS POSSIBILITY OF FILLING IN SHALLOWS BETWEEN HULULE AND ANOTHER ADJACENT ISLAND BUT THIS WOULD REQUIRE REALIGNING AXIS OF RUNWAY AND COST OF SUCH PROJECT COULD RUN AS HIGH AS \$25 MILLION. WHETHER MALDIVIANS CAN FIND RESOURCES FROM OUTSIDE DONORS TO ACCOMPLISH THIS IS PROBLEMATICAL.

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15. RAF GAN MAY BECOME TOURIST TRANSFER POINT: ANOTHER
POSSIBILITY FOR MOVING TOURISTS IS TO FLY THEM TO RAF GAN FROM
EUROPE BY COMMERCIAL AIRLINERS AND THEN FERRY PASSENGERS TO MALE
ATOLL BY TWO CONVAIR 440'S RECENTLY ACQUIRED BY AIR MALDIVES.
BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER HAD TOLD AMBASSADOR BRITISH HAVE NO
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PROBLEM WITH THIS IN PRINCIPLE (IN FACT THEY PROBABLY HAVE LITTLE

CHOICE IN MATTER), BUT ARE WORRIED BY LACK OF FACILITIES FOR TOURISTS SHOULD THEY NOT BE MOVED FROM GAN RIGHT AWAY. PRIME MINISTER ZAKI SAYS THAT GOM MIGHT BUILD TOURIST FACILITIES ON ISLANDS IN ADDU ATOLL, IN WHICH GAN IS LOCATED, TO ACCOMMODATE TOURISTS ON SHORT-TERM BASIS AND HE INDICATED THIS TOPIC WOULD BE ONE OF MAIN SUBJECTS HE WOULD DISCUSS DURING HIS UPCOMING VISIT TO LONDON.

16. EDUCATION: NEED TO UPGRADE SYSTEM: DURING MEETING WITH EDUCATION MINISTER ADNAN HUSSAIN, AMBASSADOR PRESENTED TWO TWENTY-VOLUME SETS OF "BOOK OF KNOWLEDGE" ENCYCLOPEDIA WHICH WERE MADE AVAILABLE BY USIS FOR AMADIYA AND MAJEEDIYA SCHOOLS. DISCUSSIONS AT MEETING CENTERED ON GOM'S ASSESSMENT OF ITS EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND ITS REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM USG. MINISTER INDICATED GREATEST NEED NOW IS TO UPGRADE LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN TWO GOVERNMENT ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MEDIUM SCHOOLS IN MALE FROM GCE "O" LEVEL (10TH GRADE) TO "A" LEVEL (12TH GRADE) IN ACCORDANCE WITH PLAN RECENTLY DRAWN UP BY GOM. HE NOTED MAIN PROBLEM FOR GOM IN SENDING STUDENTS ABROAD IS FACT THAT MOST COUNTRIES HAVE PROGRAMS ONLY FOR STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL, WHICH PUTS MALDIVIANS AT DISADVANTAGE. MAIN REQUIREMENT FOR UPGRADING TO "A" LEVEL IS LABORATORY EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES FOR INTRODUCING CHEMISTRY AND PHYSICS COURSES INTO CURRICULUM AND HUSSAIN MADE STRONG PITCH FOR USG HELP IN THIS FIELD.

17. TEACHERS ALSO REQUESTED: ALSO NEEDED ARE TEACHERS ON GRANT BASIS AND INDIA, AS NOTED, IS PROVIDING THREE. HOWEVER, 75 CEYLONESE TEACHERS HIRED DIRECTLY PROVIDE MOST OF TEACHING IN ENGLISH MEDIUM AND REQUIRE 80 PERCENT OF GOM'S EDUCATION BUDGET. MALDIVIANS PRESENTLY HAVE 76 STUDENTS ABROAD ON OFFICIAL SCHOLARSHIPS, INCLUDING FIVE AT AUB, AND AUSTRALIA, IN PARTICULAR, WITH 19 STUDENTS, HAS SHOWN INTEREST IN TRAINING MALDIVIANS, INCLUDING MEMBERS OF THE MINUTE DIPLOMATIC SERVICE. HUSSAIN INDICATED GOM HAS NO PLANS TO WITHDRAW FIVE AID-SUPPORTED STUDENTS AT AUB ALTHOUGH HE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER SECURITY SITUATION IN LEBANON AND PREVIOUS STRIKES AT AUB. AMBASSADOR TOLD EDUCATION MINISTER THAT WE WOULD EXAMINE REQUEST CAREFULLY AND SYMPATHETICALLY BUT THAT HE COULD GIVE NO INDICATION AT PRESENT WHETHER WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO ASSIST.

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18. SOME PROTEST BENEATH CALM EXTERIOR: DURING EMBASSY PARTY'S STAY IN MALDIVES PRESENT GOVERNMENT SEEMED TO BE FIRMLY IN SADDLE. THERE WAS SOME CONCERN EXPRESSED OVER PRESIDENT NASIR'S HEALTH AND PRESIDENT CANCELLED CALL BY AMBASSADOR CUE TO FLU. WE WERE TOLD THAT HE HAS TO BE ESPECIALLY CAREFUL DUE TO HIS CHRONIC KIDNEY WEAKNESS. (HE HAS ONE KIDNEY REMOVED SEVERAL YEARS AGO). THERE WAS NO HINT OF FALL-OUT FROM DEMONSTRATION AGAINST PRESIDENT ABOUT MONTH AGO, REPORTEDLY LED BY AGRICULTURE MINISTER FAROUK ISMAIL-WHO HAS NOW BEEN DROPPED FROM CABINET AND

AS REPORTEDLY UNDER DETENTION. DURING DEMONSTRATION PARTICIPANTS ARE SAID TO HAVE SHOUTED SLOGANS PROTESTING AGAINST PRESIDENT NASIR AND ALI MANIKU LINING THEIR POCKETS AND SETTING UP LUXURIOUS TOURIST RESORTS WHILE MALDIVIAN PEOPLE FACE FOOD SHORTAGES. IN FACT, THERE IS REASON TO BELIEVE THAT LACK OF FOOD SUPPLIES ON WORLD MARKET LAST WINTER AND GOM'S REFUSAL TO SPEND MORE THAN IT EARNED DID CREATE SHORTAGE OF FOOD GRAINS, ALMOST ALL OF WHICH HAD TO BE IMPORTED. IT SEEMS DOUBTFUL, HOWEVER, PRESENT AUTOCRATIC SET-UP WILL LOSE ITS GRIP ON POPULACE IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE.

19. U.S. NAVY WELCOMED: UNITED STATES-GOM RELATIONS ARE FRIENDLY IF VERY LIMITED. PRIME MINISTER ZAKI MADE POINT OF WELCOMING VISIT BY AMBASSADOR AND U.S. NAVY SHIP AND EXPRESSED INTEREST IN HAVING VISITS BY SHIPS SOMEWHAT MORE FREQUENTLY, ONCE

PERHAPS UP TO TWICE IN YEAR, NOT, HOWEVER, DURING TOURIST SEASON (OCTOBER THROUGH MARCH).

20. SUPPORT FOR U.S. INITIATIVES IN MIDDLE EAST: PRIME MINISTER ALSO EXPRESSED HIS GREAT JOY AT SUCCESSFUL AMERICAN EFFORTS TO PROMOTE PEACE IN MIDDLE EAST. HE SAID THAT SEEING PICTURE OF PRESIDENT SADAT WARMLY WELCOMING PRESIDENT NIXON IN EGYPT HAD AFFECTED HIM PROFOUNDLY AND HE SUPPORTED THESE EFFORTS WHEN HIGH GOM COULD HAVE LITTLE INFLUENCE IN SUCH MATTERS.

21. INDIAN OCEAN AND DIEGO GARCIA: AS FOLLOW-UP TO HIS EARLIER LETTER TO MALDIVIAN PRIME MINISTER ON U.S. INDIAN OCEAN POLICY, AMBASSADOR TOOK OPPORTUNITY BRIEF ZAKI DIRECTLY ON THIS SUBJECT. HE ASSURED ZAKI THAT UNITED STATES PLANS TO EXPAND DIEGO GARCIA WERE NOT DIRECTED AGAINST ANY LITTORAL COUNTRY AND DID NOT ENTAIL MILITARY BASE, BUT RATHER INVOLVED FACILITIES TO SUPPORT PERIODIC
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MOVEMENTS OF U.S. NAVAL VESSELS AND AIRCRAFT IN INDIAN OCEAN. AMBASSADOR NOTED THAT SOVIET NAVAL ACTIVITY IN INDIAN OCEAN HAD INCREASED CONSIDERABLY IN RECENT YEARS AND THAT WE BELIEVED THAT U.S. PRESENCE WOULD HELP TO PROVIDE FORM OF BALANCE AND HELPFUL OFFSET WHICH TOOK ACCOUNT OF INTERESTS OF LITTORAL STATES. ZAKI SEEMED TO ACCEPT THIS, NOTING THAT WHILE HE WAS IN INDIA, GOI HAD TRIED TO INCLUDE SOME MATTERS IN JOINT COMMUNIQUE RELATING TO OUTSIDE NAVAL FORCES AND INDIAN OCEAN PEACE ZONE (IOPZ) PROPOSAL WHICH HE WAS UNABLE TO ACCEPT. ALTHOUGH HE HAD EXPRESSED REGRET THAT OUTSIDE MILITARY FORCES WERE IN OCEAN, HE HAD MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE WAS REFERRING TO ALL OUTSIDE POWERS. AMBASSADOR NOTED THIS POSITION SEEMED GENERALLY TO PARALLEL AUSTRALIAN APPROACH. PRIME MINISTER TALKED FREELY ON ALL SUBJECTS, SEEMED INTERESTED IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, AND, WHILE UNWILLING TO TAKE SIDES, WAS RECEPTIVE TO EXPOSITION OF U.S. POSITION.

2. DISCUSSION OF U.S. POLICY CONSIDERATIONS
TOWARD MALDIVES BEING SENT SEPTTEL.
VAN HOLLEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, EDUCATION, SHIPBUILDING INDUSTRY, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS, NAVAL SHIPS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974COLOMB02000
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740193-0314
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740742/aaaabkcp.tel
Line Count: 604
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 11
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A) COLOMBO 676 (NOTAL) B) COLOMBO 31, 13
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 APR 2002 by garlanwa>; APPROVED <27 MAR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR'S VISIT TO MALDIVES, JULY 5-8, 1974 CONFIDENTIAL
TAGS: PFOR, ECON, MV, IN, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005